



Oregon Crime Victims Law Center

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February 3, 2022

RE: Senate Bill 1511

Dear Chair Prozanski and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Crime Victims Law Center, a nonprofit organization that provides free legal representation and advocacy to crime victims throughout the state. OCVLC's attorneys assist victims with asserting and seeking enforcement of their constitutional and statutory rights in the criminal justice system.

Thank you for your careful consideration of SB 1511, a bill that will have a significant impact on victims in Oregon. One of the fundamental rights guaranteed by our Constitution is that victims of crime in Oregon are to have a "meaningful role" in the criminal justice system, and are to be treated with "due dignity and respect." For that role to truly be meaningful, it is critical that victims be included in the process that is contemplated under SB 1511.

As currently drafted, SB 1511 does not provide for any notification procedures for victims or for their participation in any way. It is unfortunately all too common that victims' voices are left out of the criminal justice process. Without specific provisions for victim notification and participation, SB 1511 unwinds the progress that has been made in acknowledging the critical role victims play and in Oregon's commitment to ensuring victims are treated with the dignity and respect that the Constitution demands.

Oregon's victims of some of the most serious crimes we see are going to be facing new trauma as thousands of cases are returned and potentially re-litigated. Yet as drafted SB 1511 has no provisions for increased victim services. There is going to be an enormous need for trauma-informed services, and we must ensure that victims have easy access to these services as they learn that a part of their lives they considered to be closed is reopened.

Oregon guarantees its victims a right to justice. By leaving victims out of the process, by failing to consider victims' voices, and by not providing a process for proper notification, SB 1511 ignores that right to justice. Please consider allowing victims the meaningful role promised by the Oregon Constitution in SB 1511. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rosemary W. Brewer
Executive Director